

RESTORING SEABIRDS ON SAN NICOLAS ISLAND



Nesting seabirds that were preyed upon by feral cats on Natividad Island (Baja Mexico).
Holly Gellerman



Island fox pups on San Nicolas Island.
Francesca Ferrera



Western gull chicks on Anacapa Island.
Jennifer Boyce

Island Ecosystems in Danger

Islands support a diversity of life and provide important habitat for seabirds and marine mammals. Unfortunately, between 80-90% of all recent extinctions have been of island species, and more than half of those have been the direct result of the effects of introduced species. The feral cat, a generalist predator, is among the most detrimental of such invasive species, causing population decline, extirpation, and extinction to a diverse array of wildlife.

Feral Cats on San Nicolas Island

On the U.S. Navy-owned San Nicolas Island located off southern California, non-native feral cats are taking their toll on native wildlife. Feral cats on San Nicolas island are known to kill seabirds, the western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*), the island night lizard (*Xantusia riversiana*), and the endemic deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus exterus*). They also compete with the State threatened San Nicolas island fox (*Urocyon littoralis dickeyi*) for food and habitat.

Restoring Balance

The Trustee Council for the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program was created in 2001 to restore marine resources in the southern California region that were harmed by releases of DDT into the marine environment. Brandt's cormorants (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*) and western gulls (*Larus occidentalis*) which use San Nicolas island as a breeding site were severely affected by the releases of DDT. To restore these seabird populations and to protect the native fauna on San Nicolas island, the Trustee Council has proposed to humanely eradicate feral cats.

The eradication of feral cats on San Nicolas Island will provide benefits to:

- Nesting seabirds
- State threatened San Nicolas island fox
- Federally threatened island night lizard
- Federally threatened western snowy plover
- Endemic deer mouse
- Island biodiversity

Environmental Assessment

On behalf of the Trustee Council, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency for this project and the U.S. Navy is a cooperating agency. An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. As discussed in the EA, the proposed action is to use a combination of trapping and hunting through integrated adaptive management to eradicate feral cats from the island.

The EA will undergo public review in the Spring of 2008. For more information on the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program, please visit our website at:

www.montroserestoration.gov

For more information contact:

Jane Hendron
Public Affairs Division Chief
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
6010 Hidden Valley Road
Carlsbad, CA 92011
760-431-9440
Jane_Hendron@fws.gov

